

ANCIENT & MODERN

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN
JANE ENGLAND

10 APRIL – 17 MAY 2008

Ancient & Modern presents photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn and Jane England. The pictures, taken in 1917 and during the late 1970s and early '80s respectively, frame the English Modern period from the Vorticists to the New Romantics.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1882, Alvin Langdon Coburn moved to London in 1904. He became well known for his Symbolist photogravures of cities and landscapes (many published in Alfred Stieglitz's Camera Work magazine) and for portraits of contemporary writers and artists. In 1906 he held a solo exhibition at the Royal Photographic Society in London; the following year George Bernard Shaw described him as the greatest photographer in the world. At the height of the First World War, taking inspiration from the Vorticists, he began to produce abstract photographs he called 'Vortographs'. Coburn died in Denbighshire, Wales, in November 1966.

A series of Coburn's Vortographs that bear witness to the end of the Edwardian era are presented alongside photographs by Jane England taken during a new Edwardian, or Teddy Boy revival in the mid 1970s.

England's images of artists and designers, club kids, Teddy boys, royal émigrés, transvestites and aspirant models span the height of London's Punk scene to the birth of New Romanticism. Many of her subjects are forgotten, having retreated to the suburbs or died tragically young. Others such Phillip Sallon, Vivienne Westwood and Jordan, have since become icons of the era. England's photographs were often choreographed - her protagonists posing in costumes of their own invention or culled from Portobello market and theatrical suppliers. They are pictured in public and private spaces across north and west London, in palatial squats and on grubby street corners.

Jane England read Art History at Melbourne University before moving to London in 1973. Inspired by photographers such as Dianne Arbus and Guy Bourdin, England photographed friends and associates at a time when marginalised groups and sub-cultures merged and came together, with a shared sense of nihilism and decadence, within London's art and club scenes. In 1988 England opened a gallery, England & Co, in Westbourne Grove.

Gallery open 12 - 6pm, Thursday - Saturday and by appointment.
For further information please contact rob@ancientandmodern.org